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SUBJECT: THE WEEK IN PARLIAMENT, 5/2-5/7: MORE ANGER OVER
CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

REF: A. KABUL 1119

[1](#)B. KABUL 1042

[1](#)1. Lower House MPs exploded in anger Wednesday (May 6) over new reports of civilian casualties resulting from a joint Afghan Army-Coalition forces operation in Bala Boluk district of Farah province this week. Afghan media and NGOs reported between 40 and 160 civilians killed, prompting many MPs to renew calls for the withdrawal of foreign forces. Speaker Yunus Qanooni called for the government to introduce a draft law on the "legalization" of ISAF's mission within one week (reftels). Qanooni also proposed a delegation of parliamentarians meet with UNAMA, the US Embassy, ISAF, and the US Congress to express Afghan anger over the continued incidents of civilian casualties.

[1](#)2. Qanooni, generally a supporter of Coalition forces, introduced the proposals to stem rapidly rising tempers among MPs. As Wednesday's debate raged on, several MPs launched into virulently anti-Coalition and anti-US diatribes. MP Sayed Alemi Balkhi (Kabul, Hazara) proposed inviting Taliban forces to assume control of security operations in western Afghanistan "in order to protect Afghan civilians from the Americans." MP Shakiba Hashimi (Kandahar, Pashtun) said the Coalition had broken its promise to limit operations in populated areas. MP Mawlawi Rahman (Laghman, Pashtun) called ISAF operations "inhuman."

[1](#)3. MPs historically supportive of the presence of Coalition forces expressed exasperation that they could no longer defend ISAF's mission to their constituents. "You are giving Russia and Iran an open door to promote their agendas with the Afghan people," MP Rahman Oghly (Faryab, Uzbek) told PolOff after the debate. MP Najla Dehqannejad (Herat, Tajik) said what she characterized as the "muted" response from Coalition leaders immediately following the Farah events mirrored last year's incident in Herat's Shindand district. Other MPs directed their anger at the government. MP Naim Farahi (Farah, Pashtun) called for the impeachment of the ministers of Interior and Defense, and the director of the National Directorate of Security.

[1](#)4. The Farah debate delayed action the Electoral Law and Private Security Companies Law. Earlier in the week:

- MPs in both houses discussed the assassination of the mayor of Mehterlam, Laghman province. The mayor was a brother of MP Alem Qarar (Laghman, Pashtun).

- The Lower House ratified several international conventions and a bilateral agreement with Qatar concerning Afghan laborers.

- The Lower House passed the Chamber of Commerce Law. Some MPs tried to nationalize the chamber's holdings, but a majority of MPs supported a bill close to the government's proposed legislation.

- The Upper House passed the Extradition Law, despite

concerns from the international community that newly inserted language would make it more difficult to extradite foreign-born terrorist suspects and drug traffickers captured in Afghanistan. The bill now goes to a joint committee, where MPs will hammer out differences between the two houses' versions.

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